

The following letter is written by Mike Leon, on-behalf of the family of his father, the late Sidney Leon, announcing the closing of his store.

Dear Editor,

After almost one hundred years of service, Irving's Famous Clothes – a Hamilton landmark," is going to be closing. We wanted to use this short space to tell the public why and to invite them to be a part of the memory and legacy of its late President, Sid Leon.

On Tuesday December 18th we tragically and suddenly lost Sid Leon, our Father, Husband, Friend, Colleague and Mentor. Since then we have tried to find a way to deal with the grief of losing him, while finding a way to honour his memory and legacy. Our initial thought was to keep the store running as if he were here.

But that's when the truth really set in: he's not.

Paul Wilson really put it best in his Dec 20th CBC tribute to Sid: "He had no back-room sweatshop. It was Sid with the scissors, Sid running the sewing machine, Sid letting out the waist on your dress pants." We always knew it really, but it particularly hit home when it came down to looking at the future of the store: Dad did the job of a small army. That is irreplaceable. And so is the indelible mark his personality left on his customers.

Sid was the brand: plain and simple.

And so, as much as it hurts, we believe the best way to honour his memory is to end the chapter of the store the way he intended to: on a high note. Sid had planned on running a huge sale two years from now to mark the 100th anniversary of the store. He envisioned more than just a sale, but a community event. And so it will be. On Thursday February 14th, we will be starting the Goodbye sale for Irving's Famous Clothes. There will be huge discounts, along with some special tributes to Sid.

One of the best tributes of all is we will be installing a donation box in the store. All proceeds will go towards "Project Concern," a charitable initiative of Hamilton Police Services that benefits several charities in the Hamilton area.

The Police were not just a major client of Irving's, but treasured friends. We can think of no greater tribute to Sid Leon's memory than using this sale in part to benefit the work they do.

We're also going to honour Sid's memory on line. We've set up a Facebook page – www.facebook.com/irvingsgoodbye . We'll be including regular sale updates, but mostly using it as a space for people to contribute stories, thoughts and good-byes for Sid Leon. Please visit and share frequently.

See you at Irving's for one last good-bye. 62 James Street North, at the corner of James and Rebecca.

Sincerely,

The Family of Sid Leon